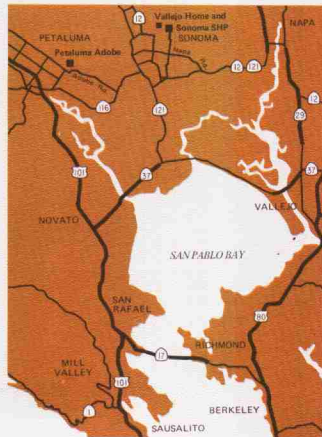


About Your Visit

Sonoma State Historic Park is open to the public almost every day of the year. Park staff members are on duty in the Mission and at the Vallejo Home; historical photographs and displays can be seen in the park headquarters building near the Toscano Hotel on the north side of the plaza. A large parking lot has been provided behind the Toscano Hotel and Sonoma Barracks.

Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park, which tells still another facet of the Vallejo story, is a twenty minute drive from Sonoma. The huge old adobe ranch building, the largest private hacienda in California between 1834 and 1846, was the center of activity on one of the most prosperous private estates established during the Mexican period.

Advance notice of any group visit is appreciated. Appointments for special school-tour educational service (and waiving of fees) are stipulated in joint policy with State Superintendent of Public Instruction; to qualify a class, kindergarten through 12th grade and accompanying adults, the teacher must initiate and have received a confirmed School Reservation Request Form fifteen days prior to class visit. Apply P.O. Box 167, Sonoma, CA 95476 or call (707) 996-1744.



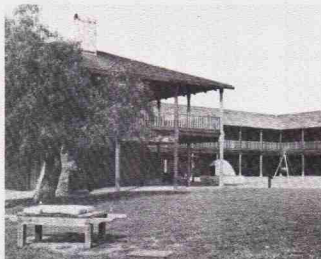
Sonoma: Toscano Hotel and Sonoma Barracks



Vallejo Home



Petaluma Adobe



sonoma

STATE HISTORIC PARK

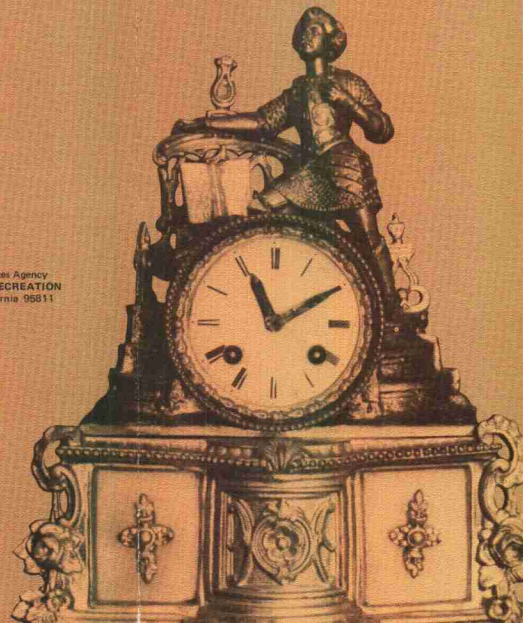
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Site of the most northerly Franciscan Mission in California ...

Mexican Provincial headquarters for the Northern Frontier ...

Birthplace of the California State "Bear" Flag ...



Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo



Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo

Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo was born in Monterey, California on July 4, 1807. He attended school in Monterey and was considered an outstanding student. At the age of 16 he was accepted as a military cadet in the Presidial Company of Monterey. He rose rapidly through the ranks, and in 1829 became a military hero when an expedition under his command defeated a clever and highly determined band of runaway mission Indians who had set up a stronghold in the San Joaquin Valley. In 1831 Vallejo was named Commander of the Presidio at San Francisco.

The rugged coast, sun-drenched hills, and fertile valleys of the Sonoma region were enjoyed by Pomo and Coastal Miwok Indians for many relatively quiet, little-known centuries before European explorers first visited the area. In the nineteenth century, however, the colonial ambitions of several world powers — notably Spain, Russia, and the United States — began to converge in the Sonoma region and to bring about changes that would permanently alter the course of human affairs in this gentle landscape.

Spanish interest in the New World had begun with the voyages of Columbus. Spanish colonial development of both North and South America progressed rapidly after the landing of Hernan Cortez in Mexico in 1519, and by the 1830s, after more than 300 years of continual expansion, the northern frontier of "New Spain" had reached the perimeter of San Francisco Bay and pushed beyond it to a frontier headquarters at Sonoma.

Russian interest in the New World was focused primarily on the far north, on the Aleutian Islands, and the Russian colony at Sitka, Alaska. In 1812, however, the lucrative California sea otter trade and certain agricultural possibilities induced the Russians to establish outposts at Bodega Bay and Fort Ross on the California Coast not far from Sonoma. These outposts were the cause of widespread and continual speculation about future Russian intentions in California.

United States interest in California was first sharpened during the 1820s and '30s by the reports of whalers, merchants, and mountain men. Then in the late 1830s and early '40s United States interest grew suddenly stronger as overland migration began to make a reality of the American dream of "Manifest Destiny" — the vision of a great republic, one nation composed of many states, that would span the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

During the 1830s and '40s one man stood at the focal point where these international forces came together. For a time this man — a brilliant, young Mexican army officer — managed to control the situation and was carried upward to great wealth and power. Then, rather suddenly, the wheel of fortune turned still further and General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo found himself left behind by the turbulent flow of events and faced with increasing personal obscurity and gradual financial disaster.

In 1833 Governor Jose Figueroa sent Vallejo north to visit the Russian outposts at Bodega Bay and Fort Ross, and establish Mexican settlements in the fertile valleys north of San Francisco Bay. Vallejo got on well with the Russians and managed to learn a great deal about their operations, but his attempt to place settlers at either Petaluma or Santa Rosa was blocked by Father Gutierrez of Mission San Francisco Solano at Sonoma.

In 1834, Governor Figueroa gave Vallejo vastly increased powers and sent him north once again. His title was Military Commander and Director of Colonization of the Northern Frontier, and he was specifically requested to

take charge of the mission at Sonoma, reduce it to the status of a parish church, free the Indian workers, and distribute the mission lands and other assets among the population at large. To reward and encourage the bright young army officer, Governor Figueroa gave Vallejo ten leagues of land (44,000 acres) in the Petaluma Valley to develop as a private rancho. This highly productive agricultural empire, combined with Vallejo's far-reaching civil and military powers soon made him one of the wealthiest and most influential men in California. In 1836, a new governor, Juan Bautista Alvarado, named Vallejo Commandante General of all Mexican military forces in California, and though this title was later changed, Vallejo remained the undisputed ruler north of San Francisco Bay as long as California remained a Mexican Province. He surveyed and established the Pueblo of Sonoma, gave land grants to private citizens, and directed military affairs. His adobe home on the plaza at Sonoma, La Casa Grande, attracted visitors from throughout the world, and was one of the largest and best furnished private homes in California. Petaluma Rancho prospered greatly, and was increased in size in 1844. Vallejo also acquired the 80,000-acre Rancho Soscol and other lands that brought his total land holdings in 1846 to more than 175,000 acres.

The Turning Point

In 1841 the Russians decided to abandon their outposts at Bodega and Fort Ross. Vallejo looked on this as a personal triumph. At the same time, however, an increasing number of U.S. citizens were beginning to arrive in the weakly held, poorly administered province of California and many people, including Vallejo, began to feel that in the long run U.S. takeover was inevitable. On June 14, 1846, a group of 30 to 40 American frontiersmen took matters into their own hands. They "captured" the disarmed and unresisting Pueblo of Sonoma, "arrested"

Vallejo, and had him imprisoned at Sutter's Fort. They announced the establishment of a free and independent Republic of California and raised a new, homemade flag — the Bear Flag — over Sonoma. Less than a month later the U.S. flag was raised over California, and in August U.S. officials freed Vallejo and allowed him to return home. To his dismay, however, he found that his rancho had been stripped of its horses, cattle, and other commodities by the Bear Flaggers, and by the free-wheeling American captain, John C. Fremont. Although Vallejo attempted to restructure his affairs to fit the new era, this political and economic setback was only the first of many that haunted his life after the decisive year of 1846.

The American Period

In 1848 Vallejo was a delegate to California's constitutional convention, and he was elected to the State Senate in 1850. In that same year he offered to donate a 150-acre site and \$370,000 worth of buildings to establish a permanent state capitol in a new city he proposed to call "Eureka," but which soon came to be known as "Vallejo." His grandiose plans for the capitol and the new city around it ran into gold-rush-era labor troubles and fell through entirely in 1854 when the legislature grew tired of waiting and decided to establish permanent quarters in Sacramento. This was a serious blow to Vallejo's personal prestige, and to his long-range economic dreams and ambitions. Afterward he limited his political activities to the local level. He was elected Mayor of Sonoma in 1852 and again in 1860. In later years, as his fortune continued to decline, he lived quietly at his home, Lachryma Montis, reading a great deal, writing a five-volume history of California's Mexican period, and corresponding with his large family and many friends. He died in 1890 at the age of 82 and was buried in the little cemetery on the hill above Sonoma.

The Bear Flag

The original Bear Flag consisted of a crudely drawn bear, and a star drawn on unbleached cotton with blackberry juice along with the words, "California Republic." A piece of red flannel was sewn onto the bottom to produce a red stripe. The whole flag was about three by five feet. It flew over Sonoma for nearly a month until it was replaced on July 9, 1846 by the Stars and Stripes.



The Bear Flag Monument

A. Three-story adobe tower; B. Main wing of La Casa Grande; C. Servants' wing of La Casa Grande; D. Garrison wall of the 1830s; E. Toscano Hotel; F. Barracks; G. North Barracks (or stable?) site; H. Chapel or church of Mission San Francisco Solano; I. Residence building of the mission; J. Blue Wing Inn.

1. Salvadore Vallejo adobe of 1850 (Now the Swiss Hotel, California Historical Landmark Number 490); 2. Salvadore Vallejo residence site; 3. El Dorado Hotel (California Historical Landmark Number 501); 4. L.W. Boggs residence site; 5. Jacob Leese residence of 1846; In 1850 the residence of General Persifer F. Smith. (Now The Storm Center, Steiner's Tavern, etc.) 6. Residence site of Lt. Colonel Joe Hooker (later General Hooker of Civil War fame); 7. Union Hotel site (Now the Bank of America); 8. Site of Sonoma County's first court house; 9. 12. Adobe buildings lined the east side of the plaza by the mid-1850s, and included Duhring's general store (9); Christian Brunning's butcher shop (10); a blacksmith shop (11); Peter's billiard hall (12); Sonoma's first post office (also 12); and several residences. 13. Site of large adobe church.



Mission San Francisco Solano de Sonoma

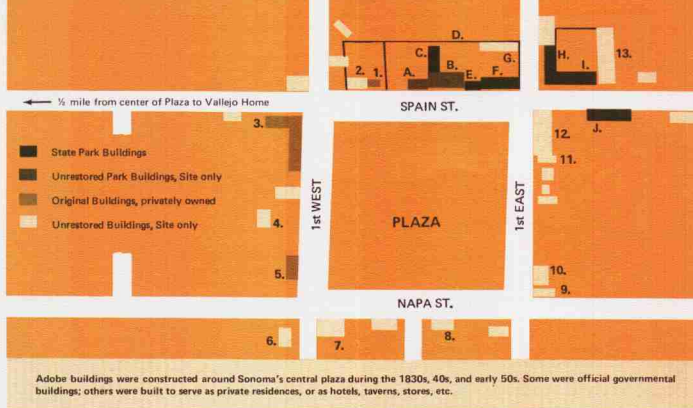
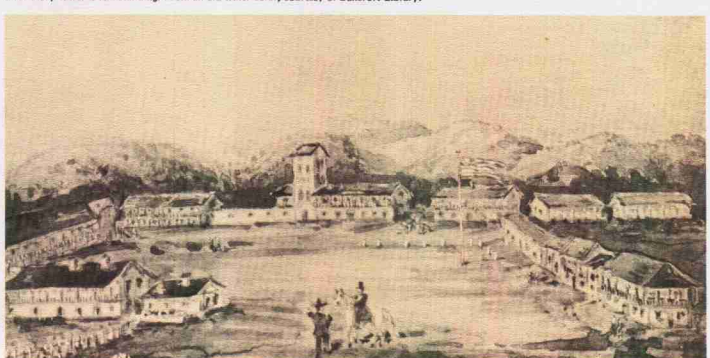
The site of Mission San Francisco Solano was selected and ceremoniously consecrated by Father Jose Altamira on July 4, 1823. Young, ambitious, and impatient, Father Altamira was acting with the approval of Governor Luis Arguello, but without official church sanction. He intended to close down the mission establishments at San Francisco and San Rafael and move their people and goods to Sonoma where water, wood, stone, and other building materials were all easily available and where climate and soil conditions were promising. Father Altamira's plan was hotly opposed by several mission fathers, but Father Vicente Sarria, the chief administrator of the California Missions, managed to work out a compromise solution whereby all of the established mission sites would continue in operation, and would simply supply Indian laborers (on a volunteer basis) and also provisions for the founding of the new mission. With this administrative dispute more or less resolved, Father Altamira proceeded to the new site and directed construction of the first buildings and other improvements.

The first building was a temporary wooden structure plastered inside and out with whitewashed mud. In 1823 a long, low adobe wing to be used for living quarters and other purposes was completed. Much neglected over the years and then partially reconstructed, this building, which stands just east of the present chapel, is the oldest building at Sonoma.

Indian troubles drove Father Altamira from Sonoma in 1826, but his work was continued by Father Fortuni who remained at Sonoma from 1826 to 1833, and under whose direction the mission reached peak prosperity around 1830 when nearly 1,000 Indians were in residence there. Under his direction the foundation for a large, permanent church was laid just east of the padre's quarters in 1827. Work on the adobe walls was finally begun in 1830, and then continued until 1833 when the building was almost complete. In the spring of that year, however, a sudden rainstorm caused severe damage and appears to have rendered the building unusable. In 1840 and '41 the present chapel was constructed and furnished by General Vallejo in order to provide Sonoma with a parish church.

After 1881 the chapel and its adjoining residence building were sold by the church and used variously as a hay barn, winery, and blacksmith shop. The buildings became a state monument when the Historic Landmarks League purchased them in 1903, and they became state property in 1906. Basic restoration work was begun in 1909 and carried out in various phases over the years. In fact archeological investigations and restoration programs are still undertaken from time to time under state direction. The mission buildings are today listed as State Historic Landmark Number 3.

The plaza at Sonoma as it looked during the early 1850s. The U.S. flag is flying. The Toscano Hotel has not yet been built. The Casa Grande with its three story tower is still standing. From an old water color, courtesy of Bancroft Library.



The Blue Wing Inn

The long, low adobe building just across from the mission derives its name from the Blue Wing Inn, gambling room and saloon of the gold rush era. It is thought that portions of the building were originally constructed to house soldiers assigned to the Sonoma Mission and that those structures were joined together and a second story added at a later date. The building was acquired by the state in 1968 and houses several concession-operated gift shops. It is California Historical Landmark Number 17.

The Plaza

Sonoma's central plaza, the largest of its kind in California, was originally surveyed by General Vallejo in 1834 with the help of Captain William A. Richardson, the same man who later played an important role in the early development of San Francisco. Site of many fiestas, parades, and other historical events, the plaza was dedicated as a National Historic Landmark on September 24, 1961.

Sonoma Barracks

The two-story, wide-balconied, adobe barracks facing Sonoma's central plaza was built to house Mexican army troops under the command of General Vallejo. These troops first arrived in Sonoma in 1834 when Vallejo, then the Commandant of the Presidio at San Francisco, was instructed to move his garrison to Sonoma. From then until 1846, Sonoma was the headquarters of the commandant of the Frontera del Norte — the Mexican provincial frontier of the north. Actual construction of the adobe barracks building probably took place in stages, but was more or less completed in 1840 and '41.

In the years after 1835, more than 100 military expeditions set out from Sonoma with the object of subduing the Wappos, Caimaneros, or Satsiyomis Indians who more than once rose up and attempted to throw off Mexican domination of the country around Sonoma. Many of these expeditions were led by Vallejo himself, but others were led by Vallejo's younger brother, Salvadore, or by Sen-Yeto, the tall, ruggedly handsome Chief of the Suisun Indians whose christian name was Francisco Solano, and who came to be one of Vallejo's closest and most valuable allies.

Following the Bear Flag takeover of Sonoma on June 14, 1846, the barracks housed a number of Bear Flag followers until July 9, when the Stars and Stripes were first raised at Sonoma. Thereafter the barracks were used by various U.S. military forces starting with the 50 men who made up Company "B", California Battalion Mounted Riflemen commanded by Lt. Joseph Revere, an officer in the U.S. Navy. In March 1847, these troops were replaced by Company "C" of Colonel Stevenson's New York Volunteer Regiment, and in May, 1849, a 37-man company of U.S. dragoons moved into the building and established Camp Sonoma. Throughout the next few years Sonoma continued to be an important army post, and some of the

officers who were stationed there became close friends of General Vallejo and his family.

In 1860 Vallejo remodelled the building to serve as a winery. In later years under other owners it was used as a store, law office, and private residence. Purchased by the State in 1958, and partially restored, the building is today listed as State Historical Landmark Number 316.

Toscano Hotel

The wood-frame building next to the barracks seems to have been constructed during the 1850s when it housed, among other things, a retail store and rental library. Later the building came to be used as an unpretentious, inexpensive hotel. Around 1890 when many of its customers were Italian immigrants and other working-class people, the name of the hotel changed from "Eureka" to "Toscano." Today, the Toscano is furnished with period furniture and looks much the way it did around the turn of the century. The kitchen and dining room were in separate building behind the one facing the plaza. The gray, two-story, wood-frame building that now houses the park headquarters and interpretive center dates from the turn of the century when it served as a boarding house.

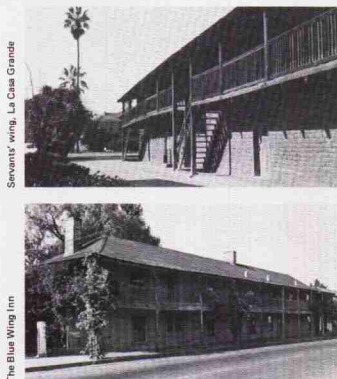
La Casa Grande

General Vallejo's first home, La Casa Grande, was one of the most imposing, and well-furnished private residences in California. It stood in the middle of the block with its wide second-story balcony overlooking the plaza. Although the house was not finished until 1840, there is reason to believe that a portion of it was completed late in 1836 in time for Vallejo's second daughter to be born there on January 3, 1837. In all, eleven Vallejo children were born in the house. Over the years, along with numerous Vallejo relatives, and a continual stream of distinguished visitors from many parts of the world, they helped to make La Casa Grande the center of social and diplomatic life north of San Francisco Bay. About 1843, General Vallejo added a three-story adobe tower to the southwestern corner of the house. From this vantage point it was possible to look out over several miles of the Sonoma Valley. An adobe wall connected the tower and Salvadore Vallejo's house to the west.

It was in La Casa Grande on the morning of June 14, 1846 that the general, his brother Salvadore, and his brother-in-law Jacob Leese, were confronted by leaders of the Bear Flag Party, and following several hours of negotiations, were taken prisoner and sent to Sutter's Fort for detention.

Later the ground floor of La Casa Grande was used as a retail store, city council chamber, and for other purposes until 1854 when the entire house was turned over to the Reverend John L. Ver Mehr for use as a girl's school.

Originally built in an L-shape, the main wing of the house was destroyed by fire on February 12, 1867, leaving only the low two-story servants' wing which is still standing today.



Vallejo Home — "Lachryma Montis"

In 1850 Vallejo purchased some acreage at the foot of the hills half-a-mile west and north of Sonoma's central plaza. The land surrounded a fine, free-flowing spring that the Indians had called Chucuyem (crying mountain). Vallejo retained this name for his new estate, but translated it into Latin, Lachryma Montis, (mountain tear).

Grapevines were transplanted to the new site along with a wonderful assortment of fruit trees — olives, apples, pears, peaches, apricots, plums, nectarines, figs, and many lemon and orange trees — as well as some strictly decorative trees and shrubs. The quarter-mile-long driveway entrance was lined with cottonwood trees and Castilian roses. A vine-covered arbor shaded a wide pathway around the pond into which the spring flowed, and a number of decorative fountains and delightful little outbuildings also graced the carefully tended grounds.

In 1851-52 the main house was built beside the spring and its pool. The two-story, wood-frame house was done in the very latest carpenter's gothic, Victorian style highlighted by a large gothic window in the master bedroom, twin porches, dormer windows, and elaborate carved wooden trim along the eaves. Bricks were placed inside the walls of the house in order to keep it warm in winter and cool in summer. Each room had its own white marble fireplace. Crystal chandeliers, lace curtains, and many other furnishings including the handsome, rosewood, concert-grand piano, were imported from Europe.

Along with several pavilions and other outbuildings, Vallejo's estate also included a large barn and several houses for the working staff. Near the main house a special warehouse was erected in order to store wine, fruit, and other produce. The building was made of specially prefabricated timbers imported from Europe. Its walls were made of bricks that some say had been used as ballast on sailing ships. Eventually the building was converted to residential use and came to be known as the "Swiss Chalet." Today it serves as a museum and interpretive center for the Vallejo Home unit of Sonoma State Historic Park.

General Vallejo and his wife lived at Lachryma Montis for more than 35 years, although as time went by they were forced to live more and more quietly and unpretentiously as the General suffered one economic setback after another. Although he eventually lost nearly all of his vast land holdings, and was even forced to sell the vineyard and other "nonessential" acreage at Lachryma Montis, Vallejo remained unembittered. He was always extraordinarily generous and contributed as much or more than he could afford to family, friends, and causes in which he believed. During his last years he spent much of his time reading (at one time his library included some 12,000 books) and writing personal letters to his many children, friends and relations. During the late 1870s he collected a large number of official Mexican government papers and wrote a five-volume History of California, all of which he donated to Hubert Howe Bancroft who was then assembling a comprehensive research library on California and Western regional history. Vallejo was also an active member and supporter of the California Horticultural Society. His death in 1890 at the age of 82 was widely noticed and lamented. After his funeral hundreds of mourners formed a long procession that ceremoniously circled the plaza, paused before the site of La Casa Grande, and then proceeded solemnly to the little cemetery on the hill overlooking Sonoma.

In 1933 the Vallejo home and some 20 acres of the original Lachryma Montis lands were acquired by the State in order to protect and preserve this historic site and its collection of historic artifacts and documents. Today the buildings and grounds are carefully maintained, and the house itself is furnished throughout with many of Vallejo's personal effects — as though the General and his wife had just stepped out for a moment. The museum, grounds, and the home itself (California Historical Landmark Number 4) are open for public viewing.

